

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03  
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13  
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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9928

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 0975

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, MX, US  
SUBJ: LOPEZ PORTILLO INTERVIEW WITH AP REPORTER CLAUDE E.  
ERBSEN

REF: (A) MEXICO 907, (B) MEXICO 910

1. LOCAL PRESS MORNING JANUARY 26 CARRIES AP EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENT LOPEZ PORTILLO BY CLAUDE E. ERBSEN. SINCE WE UNDERSTAND AP MEXICO CITY HAS SENT ENGLISH TRANSLATION TO THE US, TO AVOID DUPLICATION WE WILL COMMENT ON ARTICLE WITHOUT SUMMARIZING IT. HEADLINES HERE STRESSED ITS MOST DRAMATIC BUT NOT MOST SIGNIFICANT STATEMENT: THAT JLP IS INCLINED TO ASSIST US TO RESOLVE ITS PROBLEMS WITH PANAMA AND CUBA, IF HE COULDS BE USEFUL IN THIS RESPECT. INTERVIEW IS OF PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE IN VIEW OF IMMINENT MEETING OF PRESIDENTS. (SEE MEXICO CITY 906 AND 910.)

2. COMMENT: LOPEZ PORTILLO'S CHARACTERIZATION OF US-MEXICAN RELATIONS--PARTICULARLY HIS COMMENT THAT WASHINGTON FOR BETTER OR WORSE, HAS AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE SOLUTION OF MEXICO'S NATIONAL PROBLEMS (READ FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC)--STRIKES US AS AN EFFORT TO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC CONCERNING THE NEED FOR A CLOSER AND MORE COOPERATIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE US. IN EFFECT JLP IS SAYING THAT MEXICO MUST BE  
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REALISTIC AND ACCEPT THE FACT THAT THE SOLUTION TO ITS CURRENT PROBLEMS REQUIRES CLOSER RELATIONS WITH THE US.

3. THE PRESIDENT'S OFFER TO ASSIST THE US IN RESOLVING ITS CURRENT PROBLEMS WITH PANAMA AND CUBA WAS APPARENTLY IN ANSWER TO A DIRECT QUESTION. IT SHOULD NOT BE VIEWED AS A GRATUITOUS EFFORT BY MEXICO TO INJECT ITSELF

INTO THESE BILATERAL PROBLEMS BUT RATHER AS RECOGNITION THAT THEY ARE OF POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE ENTIRE HEMISPHERE. IN THIS CONTEXT WE BELIEVE THAT JLP'S STATEMENT THAT MEXICO IS IN A POSITION TO SERVE AS A BRIDGE TO IMPROVING RELATIONS BETWEEN THE US AND LATIN AMERICA IS PRIMARILY DESIGNED AS A POLITICAL JUSTIFICATION--BOTH DOMESTICALLY AND IN THE HEMISPHERE-- FOR MEXICO'S CURRENT EFFORT TO DEVELOP A CLOSER RELATIONSHIP WITH THE US WITHOUT ADVERSELY AFFECTING ITS DESIRE FOR GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE REST OF LATIN AMERICA.

4. JLP'S CANDOR IN ACKNOWLEDGING THAT RELATIONS WITH THE US WERE NOT AT THEIR BEST DURING ECHEVERRIA'S ADMINISTRATION WHEN MEXICO EMPHASIZED A THIRD WORLD POSITION AND HIS OBSERVATION THAT THE FUTURE WILL BRING AN "INTERESTING PERIOD OF ADJUSTMENT IN US-MEXICAN RELATIONS" IS SIGNIFICANT. INDEED, IT IS THE CLEARER INDICATOR TO DATE THAT HIS ADMINISTRATION-- FOR THE TIME BEING AT LEAST -- WILL DOWNPLAY MEXICAN ASPIRATIONS FOR THIRD WORLD LEADERSHIP AND GIVE GREATER PRIORITY TO CORDIAL RELATIONS WITH THE U.S., BUT WITHOUT SACRIFICING ITS DIGNITY, INDEPENDENCE, AND POSITION AS A DEVELOPING NATION. IN FACT, LATTER CONSIDERATIONS MAY SOMETIMES REQUIRE TAKING AT LEAST ORATORICALLY STRONG NATIONALISTIC POSITIONS FOR HOME CONSUMPTION IN MEXICO AND IN REST OF LATIN AMERICA. END COMMENT.

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## Message Attributes

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